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EPA Mid-Atlantic Region Headlines

Tuesday, April 22, 2014

***** DAILY HOT LIST *****

Earth Day veterans reflect on progress

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL Llangollen Estates resident Raymond E. Majewski took time out from his graduate work at East Carolina University on the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970, to attend an environmental "teach-in." It was a time of widening public awareness about sick rivers, polluted air, toxic dumps, threatened wildlife and lost habitats. Those first years of protests and public debate sparked decades of cleanups, energy efficiency gains and environmental reform. "I think there's much more awareness now, but I don't think things have improved that much," said Majewski, who lives within a few miles of several state or federal superfund sites, a large public water wellfield threatened by pollution and the Delaware City Refinery. "People seemed to be much more concerned about the world back then. Now, it's focused more on immediate gratification, diversional activities," said Majewski, retired head of therapy and rehabilitation services for Delaware Psychiatric Center. Others counted down a long list of local and national accomplishments over the last 45 years, many to be celebrated Tuesday at events large and small, including a program at Rodney Square in Wilmington with 30 vendors, focused on a "Clean Waterways" theme. There have been giant strides since 1970, said W. Michael McCabe, a former staffer for Sen. Gary Hart, D-Colo., and then-Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del, and a former deputy Environmental Protection Agency administrator who now lives in Chadds Ford, Pa. "We've come very far. That decade of environmental legislation and the laws that created them really formed the basis for the accomplishments that we've seen," said McCabe, who served as director for national Earth Day activities in 1980. What followed were years of "greater public awareness, technological improvements and a recognition by industry that not only do they have to comply with environmental laws, but it makes economic sense to do so in the most efficient way," McCabe said. But even as all of that happened, McCabe said, emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping pollutants have mushroomed, threatening to set off a global environmental calamity. "It all pales in comparison with the challenges that climate change and the impacts of climate change are foreshadowing," said McCabe, who convened a public program in 1998, while serving as EPA regional administrator in Philadelphia, to draw attention to the threat.

Bay grasses rebound in most places

BALTIMORE SUN Underwater grasses rebounded last year in the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers, partially reversing a three-year decline in a key indicator of the bay's health, scientists

said Monday. Aerial surveys detected a 24 percent increase in aquatic vegetation baywide, from 48,195 acres in 2012 to 59,927 acres last year. That's only about third of the goal federal and state officials have set for restoring grasses to levels approaching what they were 50 or 60 years ago. Robert J. Orth, a biologist with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science who coordinates the two-state survey, called last year's growth "a good recovery from what we've been seeing in the previous three years, but it still is far off from our high point" of nearly 90,000 acres in 2002. Scientists track bay grasses annually because they are vital habitat for crabs, fish and waterfowl. They're also sensitive to changes in water quality, which Orth said makes them useful for monitoring the bay's condition. Before last year, the bay's grasses had declined to a level not seen since 1986, a retreat that scientists attributed to a spate of extremely hot summers and severe storms, as well as a troubling decline in overall water clarity. Like land-based plants, underwater grasses need sunlight to grow. Despite gains virtually everywhere else, Orth said grasses dwindled in the Severn, South and Patuxent, and virtually disappeared from the Magothy in northern Anne Arundel County. He attributed most of those losses to lack of water clarity but said he was unsure of the cause in the upper Patuxent. Orth and Lee Karrh, a biologist with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, said last year's improvement likely stemmed from more favorable weather conditions. The healthiest growth occurred in the upper and middle portions, with the Susquehanna Flats regaining some of the lushness they lost after Tropical Storms Irene and Lee in late summer 2012. Widgeon grass accounted for nearly all the rebound seen in the midbay, from just south of Cambridge down to the Pocomoke River, which Orth described as a mixed blessing. It's prone to rapid proliferation followed by steep declines, he said, so it may be vulnerable to storms. In years past, he noted, the bay supported a greater variety of grasses, capable of coping with varying conditions.

Editorial: Chesapeake Bay needs the EPA

NORFOLK VIRGINIAN-PILOT (Sunday) Attorney General Mark Herring's brief supporting Chesapeake Bay cleanup represents the kind of common sense Virginians hope to see from the state's lawyer. Yet indiscriminate railing against Washington regulation - including rules designed to clean up the long-beleaguered bay - is what Virginians customarily see from a few of their Washington lawmakers. Thankfully, only one is likely to have any impact. Herring's brief opposes a reckless lawsuit by the American Farm Bureau and a host of construction and agriculture interests seeking to prevent clean-up of the Chesapeake Bay. The Farm Bureau is challenging the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's plan to control nutrients and sediment in the bay's tributaries, fouled by agriculture and development. Decades of insufficient action by states in the watershed led to the EPA plan, which followed a lawsuit by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Big Agriculture is joined in its suit by the Dirty 21 - Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, West Virginia and Wyoming. Those states - almost all led by Republicans - are apparently worried that EPA measures to clean the Chesapeake Bay could force them to address their own rivers and streams. That should make residents wary of fishing or swimming near home. A federal judge in Pennsylvania has already rejected the argument that the EPA doesn't have the authority to clean up the bay. The case is now in the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Herring's brief cites the principle of "cooperative federalism" - necessary in a watershed that crosses state boundaries from New York to Virginia. Since the beginning of the Chesapeake compact three decades ago,

federal intervention was threatened if states' couldn't significantly improve the bay. After several missed deadlines, it's now the EPA's job to get bay progress back on track. Unsurprisingly, U.S. Rep. Bob Goodlatte bashed the EPA's efforts. "Each state knows best how to manage their water quality goals, not bureaucrats at the EPA," he said.

Report: 100,000 felt symptoms after chemical spill

CHARLESTON GAZETTE The estimates are based on physician reports to the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department and a household survey conducted by a University of South Alabama environmental engineer who was later hired by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin to investigate the impacts of the Freedom Industries spill. Dr. Rahul Gupta, director of the health department, is scheduled to present the preliminary findings this afternoon in a web-based seminar for the National Association for City and County Health Officials. The 100,000-figure, provided by environmental engineer Andrew Whelton, project far greater public health impacts on the region's residents than numbers previously released by the state Department of Health and Human Resources. DHHR had previously said that 26 people were admitted to area hospitals and 533 treated at released at those facilities for symptoms that could have been related to the spill. Those figures did not include any data for the day of the Jan. 9 spill or the day after. Also, DHHR tracked only hospital treatments, and agency officials stopped counting after Jan. 23, records show. "Those are probably gross underestimates of the true public health impacts," Gupta said. "It's the tip of the iceberg." The new data from Gupta and Whelton is based on local physicians who reported patient information to the health department. Gupta's agency received ongoing reports from 10 physicians, and extrapolated that sampling to account for all 1,600 medical providers in Kanawha and Putnam counties. Also, Whelton had surveyed 16 households in early January. Those surveys provided useful data on how many residents had experienced common spill symptoms -- skin reactions, eye irritation, nausea, and headaches -- but never sought medical treatment. That data was also used to extrapolate further from the physician reports collected by the health department. Whelton said that the new analysis has been submitted for peer review and possible publication in a scientific journal.

Bill to study effects of acidification in Bay passes

EASTON STAR DEMOCRAT COLLEGE PARK — The General Assembly passed a bill this week that would create a task force to evaluate effects of acidification in the Chesapeake Bay and other state waters and make recommendations on how to address the issue. House Bill 118, which would form the task force and charge it to make recommendations by Jan. 1, 2015, passed with bipartisan support on Monday, the final day of the 2014 session. The state Department of Natural Resources would be required to provide staff to assist the task force. Gov. Martin O'Malley has not indicated whether he will sign the legislation, a spokesman said. The bill passed unanimously in the Senate, and the House of Delegates passed it 104-32. Delegate Eric Luedtke, D-Montgomery, the bill's sponsor, said some House Republicans opposed the bill because it relates to climate change, which scientists have tied to increases in acid levels in global waters. As more carbon dioxide is released into the air, more is also absorbed into global waters, leading the water to become more acidic. This could make it more difficult for sea life, including oysters, to grow. Luedtke hopes the task force will allow the state to begin developing policies to address potential issues related to acidification. "The state's been putting millions into

oyster restoration, so it doesn't make sense to do that and not look into this issue," Luedtke said. "We need to start figuring out how we can best help watermen adapt." Some watermen said they were skeptical that the task force would help stave off acidification in the bay. "There's nothing a group of politicians comes up with that's going to end up helping us out. That's just the way it goes," Tim Devine, owner of Barren Island Oysters in Hoopers Island, said in February. "By the time it gets agreed upon, it doesn't do anything." The task force would be comprised of a senator appointed by the president of the Senate; a delegate appointed by the Speaker of the House; the secretary of natural resources; the secretary of the environment; and representatives of the state's aquaculture industry, the Maryland Watermen's Association, the National Aquarium in Baltimore, the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, all of which would be appointed by Gov. Martin O'Malley.

As Delaware riverkeeper, van Rossum uses the law

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER First you see a roof covered with solar panels. Then the native plants, where the lawn used to be. In the driveway, not far from the canoe, is an electric Chevy Volt. This is Maya van Rossum's house. It's in Bryn Mawr, which is in the Darby Creek watershed. Which drains into the Delaware River. Which van Rossum has adopted as her personal - and professional - mission in life. For two decades as the Delaware riverkeeper, she has championed the 330-mile river and its tributaries, source of drinking water for 15 million people. On the first Earth Day, in 1970, environmental groups pushed for laws to protect the nation's water, air and land. Now, organizations like the Delaware Riverkeeper Network are pushing to have them implemented and enforced. Often vocal and occasionally strident - even those who agree with her wince at times - van Rossum has a strict ethic: "We will not make the needs of the river and its communities subservient to the needs or goals of someone or something else." That includes big government, big pharma, big power, big oil and gas - some of the biggest interests in the country. The network challenged the deepening of the river channel and lost. But van Rossum sometimes wins. And sometimes wins big. The network helped scuttle a proposal to release treated VX nerve agent into the river. Another action prompted federal standards to prevent fish from being sucked into industrial cooling water intakes. A suit against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency resulted in pollution thresholds and allocations that ensure water quality far beyond the Delaware.

Oil and gas leases in bay region spark debate

RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH (Sunday) A company that's leasing oil and gas rights in Virginia's rural coastal plain has tapped a gusher of concern. Some people worry that drilling could pollute waters in the Chesapeake Bay region and turn pastoral Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula counties into noisy industrial zones. But the president of the Texas company acquiring the leases, Shore Exploration & Production Corp., said drilling could turn landowners into millionaires and help the environment by providing relatively clean-burning natural gas. "We are the true environmentalists," said Stan Sherrill, who is also the company's CEO. "Unfortunately, other people who claim to be environmentalists are giving a completely false vision of what's happening." It's hard to know just what is happening — or going to happen — because company officials keep offering different versions of their plans, said Ruby Brabo, a member of the King George County Board of Supervisors. "I think they change their answers based on what people

want,” Brabo said. There are thousands of gas wells and two oil wells in Southwest Virginia but none in eastern Virginia, state officials said. Much of the bay-region controversy centers on a drilling method called hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. Fracking typically involves injecting water, sand and chemicals underground at high pressure to break up rocks that harbor gas or oil. Critics say the process can pollute streams or underground water. Supporters say the worries are vastly overblown. Brabo said Shore officials first spoke of using the watery form of fracking, called hydrofracking. Later they said they would employ a type of fracking that uses little water by substituting substances such as nitrogen or carbon dioxide. “We don’t know what kind of fracking is going to occur,” Brabo said. In a telephone interview, Sherrill said: “We have no plans whatsoever” to use the watery fracking. Moments later, Sherrill said Shore Exploration is looking for a partner — maybe an oil company — to provide capital and perhaps do the drilling.

Marcus Hook refinery gets makeover as natural gas hub

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER It is out with the old and in with the new at the 500-acre waterfront facility formerly known as the Sunoco Marcus Hook Refinery, now the Marcus Hook Industrial Complex. Workers last week ripped down aging petroleum-processing equipment, part of a labyrinth of machinery that has produced gasoline, diesel, and kerosene for more than a century. Other crews built cryogenic storage tanks more than 130 feet tall with three-foot-thick walls that will hold the future: new fuels from the prolific Marcellus Shale region. Sunoco Logistics Partners L.P., a pipeline company that bought the property for \$60 million last year from its sister company, Sunoco Inc., is converting the site into a major center for processing and shipping natural gas liquids. “We very much hope this is only the first step in this property,” said Jonathan Hunt, director of the complex. “We’re working on a lot of possible businesses. There’s a lot of opportunities here.” Business and political leaders have hailed the rebirth of the Marcus Hook site as part of their vision of transforming the region into an energy hub tied into the shale-gas boom. “By literally linking Western Pennsylvania resources to markets in Eastern Pennsylvania and beyond, this project represents the first step in achieving that vision,” Gov. Corbett said in 2012. “It has the added benefits of creating jobs across Pennsylvania and breathing new life into the former Marcus Hook refinery site.”

Shale oil, gas drilling boom wins favor with labor unions, thwarting environmentalists

ASSOCIATED PRESS Amid early complaints that out-of-state firms got the most jobs, some local construction trade workers and union members in Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia say they’re now benefiting in a big way from the Marcellus and Utica shale oil and gas boom. That vocal support from blue-collar workers complicates efforts by environmentalists to limit the drilling process of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. “The shale became a lifesaver and a lifeline for a lot of working families,” said Dennis Martire, the mid-Atlantic regional manager for the Laborers’ International Union, or LIUNA, which represents workers in numerous construction trades. Martire said that as huge quantities of natural gas were extracted from the vast shale reserves during the past five years, union work on large pipeline jobs in Pennsylvania and West Virginia has increased significantly. In 2008, LIUNA members worked about 400,000 hours on such jobs; by 2012, that had risen to 5.7 million hours. Nationally, the Bureau of Labor Statistics says total employment in the nation’s oil and gas industry rose from about 120,000 in early 2004

to about 208,000 last month. Less than 10 percent of full-time oil and gas industry workers are represented by unions. Alex Paris, head of an Atlasburg-area contracting firm founded by his grandfather in 1928, said many of the jobs in the early years of the boom went to out-of-state workers, perhaps because the biggest drilling firms are from Texas and Oklahoma. Now there's been a shift to hiring local contractors that use union labor.

EPA: Former GOP administrators warn staff cuts will hamper mission

GREENWIRE U.S. EPA's staff is getting squeezed to its lowest level in decades, and former agency bosses are worried. The Obama administration has asked Congress to fund a staff of just over 15,000 full-time workers in fiscal 2015. That would be the lowest staffing level the agency has seen since 1989, and former chiefs who led the agency during GOP administrations say it won't be enough for EPA to do its job properly. "They can't possibly" do their jobs with that level of staffing, said Christine Todd Whitman, who led EPA during the George W. Bush administration. "That's part of what people who want to see EPA done away with are doing," she added. "It's a conscious effort to choke things off. You choke it off by refusing to appropriate the funds." The agency's staff ranged from 16,900 to 17,700 employees during the Bush administration. Its peak staffing was in fiscal 1999, during the Clinton administration, when EPA had more than 18,000 full-time equivalent employees. But in the face of tighter budgets across government -- and amid fierce criticism from Capitol Hill about the agency's priorities -- the Obama administration has sought to trim EPA's workforce through attrition and buyouts. The agency has laid out extensive plans to refocus its resources and says its smaller staff will be better supported under the budget constraints (*Greenwire*, Feb. 12). EPA Deputy Administrator Bob Perciasepe told *Greenwire* in an interview earlier this year that EPA "is not doing more with less." Instead, he said, "This is doing what we need to do differently."

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

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Swarthmore team in a race to save gas Its top speed is 35 m.p.h. It has less horsepower than a lawn mower. Nevertheless, the bright-red, fiberglass-paneled contraption in a Swarthmore College basement is very much a race car - in a race to use as little energy as possible. The svelte, three-wheeled vehicle is headed to Houston this week to compete among 125 entrants in the Shell Eco-marathon Americas. Proud of your hybrid's gas-sipping economy? Take a backseat. Some of the cars in the running can achieve thousands - yes, *thousands* - of miles per gallon of gasoline. In the 2013 contest, Laval University in Quebec took top honors with 3,587 miles per gallon. Swarthmore's machine is somewhat less frugal, at the equivalent of less than 1,300 miles per gallon, though a direct comparison with gasoline engines is tricky since it is powered by a hydrogen fuel cell. And don't get the idea that these curiosities will be showing up on the Schuylkill Expressway. The Swarthmore car weighs just 137 pounds and is 81/2 feet long. "It's a demonstration," said engineering professor Nelson Macken, the project's faculty adviser. "Totally unrealistic." Still, the race offers an idea of what might be possible on roadways of the future, with sleek, efficient vehicles powered by a variety of fuels. As in the competition, the cars of tomorrow are likely to come in several flavors, depending on where you live in the country and which energy sources are most readily available.

Marcus Hook refinery gets makeover as natural gas hub It is out with the old and in with the new at the 500-acre waterfront facility formerly known as the Sunoco Marcus Hook Refinery, now the Marcus Hook Industrial Complex. Workers last week ripped down aging petroleum-processing equipment, part of a labyrinth of machinery that has produced gasoline, diesel, and kerosene for more than a century. Other crews built cryogenic storage tanks more than 130 feet tall with three-foot-thick walls that will hold the future: new fuels from the prolific Marcellus Shale region. Sunoco Logistics Partners L.P., a pipeline company that bought the property for \$60 million last year from its sister company, Sunoco Inc., is converting the site into a major center for processing and shipping natural gas liquids. "We very much hope this is only the first step in this property," said Jonathan Hunt, director of the complex. "We're working on a lot of possible businesses. There's a lot of opportunities here." Business and political leaders have hailed the rebirth of the Marcus Hook site as part of their vision of transforming the region into an energy hub tied into the shale-gas boom. "By literally linking Western Pennsylvania resources to markets in Eastern Pennsylvania and beyond, this project represents the first step in achieving that vision," Gov. Corbett said in 2012. "It has the added benefits of creating jobs across Pennsylvania and breathing new life into the former Marcus Hook refinery site." But somebody neglected to sell the regional economic benefits to West Goshen Township in Chester County, which is crossed by an eight-inch-diameter motor-fuel pipeline that Sunoco is refurbishing to transport the Marcellus fuel as part of the project it calls Mariner East. Sunoco Logistics applied to local zoning officials two months ago to build a pumping station along the underground pipeline that will transport Marcellus ethane and propane to Marcus Hook. The pump station

site, at Boot Road and Route 202, is residentially zoned and requires a special exception as a public utility facility.

Marcellus fee buys nat-gas trucks for water utility Pennsylvania American Water on Monday announced plans to buy 18 trucks fueled by compressed natural gas under terms of a \$315,000 state grant funded from the Marcellus Shale impact fee. The new vehicles will be based in the water company's Scranton operations. Pennsylvania American last year launched a pilot with four CNG-powered pickup trucks in Punxsutawney and Coatesville. In November, it also received a \$62,800 Alternative Fuel Incentive Grant from the state Department of Environmental Protection to convert 14 new light-duty trucks to CNG. This year's grant, financed by the impact fee paid by natural gas producers, was secured through a partnership with Greater Philadelphia Clean Cities Coalition, which serves 34 counties in eastern Pennsylvania to implement alternative fuel use in transportation.

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

Letter: Fracking is bad for parks and wildlife This is in response to the April 17 Perspectives piece written by John C. Oliver III and James Seif, "Corbett Plan Is Good for Parks." The argument that fracking can fund conservation hinges on the twisted notion that we should poison and destroy state forest land to save our state forests and parks. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' highly politicized, late-in-coming shale gas monitoring report ("Drilling in Pa. Forests 'Carefully Managed'," April 16) offers proof that from 2008 to 2012, approximately 1,500 acres of state forest were directly "converted" for gas development. In total, we've lost 8,400 acres of wild recreation area forever. The industry has cut 30 miles of new roads and expanded 130 miles of existing roads to move its heavy machinery. They've also cut 104 miles of new pipeline corridor — fragmenting our forests and providing fertile ground for invasive species — to service 570 well sites on state forest lands. Now they are planning 3,000 more sites on or adjacent to state forests.

A question of conversion Many with ties to the energy industry are fighting a perception battle that is preventing more compressed natural gas vehicles from hitting the road. Matt Nealis is one of them. For years he has heard from potential clients who have shunned converting their corporate fleets of cars, trucks and buses into CNG vehicles because they think it will cost too much to bring their garages up to fire code. The CNG project manager for Larson Design Group, an architecture and engineering firm in Williamsport, Pa., spends a lot of his time consulting with fleet managers about modifying their garages to handle the demands of the different fuel — and making the case that some price estimates for the work may be inflated with unnecessary changes. "I don't want a garage modification to prohibit a company from converting to CNG," said Mr. Nealis, who often travels to conventions and trade shows educating people on the topic. "And it shouldn't, because your investment is very minor compared to the long-term return." The chemistry of compressed natural gas is different than that of diesel and unleaded gasoline. When diesel or unleaded gas leaks, it falls to the ground because it is heavier than air. CNG is lighter than air, so it rises. That can be problematic in garages built to service conventional vehicles. Fans, electrical wires, heating and ventilation systems, and a variety of other ceiling components can ignite natural gas that leaks and rises. Renovations to prepare for a CNG fleet require ceilings to meet fire code and to provide proper ventilation, so any natural gas that leaks does not linger. The National Fire Protection Association, a nonprofit organization in Quincy, Mass., sets

the standard for fire codes nationwide, including those related to CNG vehicles. Local municipalities can write their own code to supplement, or supersede, NFPA code.

Nuclear reactor owners asked to reassess quake resistance Due to higher earthquake risk in the region, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission is requiring ...

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE REVIEW

Letter: Gas drilling's benefits President Obama has underscored the urgency of revitalizing our nation's manufacturing base, especially in regions like ours where this sector — and the communities it supports — have struggled for far too long. As we know, our region's workforce is second to none. Now — driven by tightly regulated shale development — a brighter, more promising future is within reach. We are very pleased that's the message that Obama once again delivered during his recent visit to our region. As the president stated, shale has “changed the paradigm of manufacturing,” adding: “It's cheaper to manufacture in the United States than it is in Europe and/or in Asia.” Consumers, struggling with sluggish employment opportunities, are benefiting too. “We produce more natural gas than anyone — and nearly everyone's energy bill is lower because of it,” the president has stated. He's absolutely right, and as the Obama administration has made clear, safe shale production “has contributed in large measure to a reduction in CO2 emissions,” which are now at a 20-year low. At the same time, shale is generating huge amounts of impact fees and tax revenues for local economies across Pennsylvania. We are encouraged by the president's strong support of American natural gas, which is boosting our economy, protecting our environment and strengthening our national security.

Washington County crash causes chemical spill into Chartiers Creek State environmental officials don't believe a tanker spill early Monday in Washington County polluted Chartiers Creek. Authorities confined almost all of the 1,300 gallons of diesel fuel and 400 gallons of fracking wastewater spilled from a three-tanker crash on Route 18 in Canton to the shoulder of the road and storm sewer, said Department of Environmental Protection spokesman John Poister. “There is no indication of any negative environmental impact,” Poister said, noting authorities spotted no signs such as dead fish or oil sheens on the creek. Carnegie-based Weavertown Environmental Group put out floating booms to catch any diesel fuel and fracking wastewater that reached the creek. Water samples were sent for testing, Poister said. The DEP intends to remove roadside dirt that soaked up diesel, he said. A tanker hauling the fuel slammed into two tankers carrying frackwater that were stopped at a red light at Oak Grove Road and North Hewitt Avenue about 3 a.m. All three trucks overturned. That area of Route 18 remained closed until late Monday afternoon. Coen Zappi Oil & Gas Co. of Washington was shipping the diesel, Poister said.

Just-acquired tract eyed as commercial site A Lower Burrell developer has bought one of the largest undeveloped tracts of land in Harrison. Rinaldo “Ron” Zampogna Jr. confirmed that his family-owned construction and development company, R&Z Harrison Properties LP, bought about 161 acres in the Parks Plan area, also known locally as “Job's Hole.” R&Z Properties, which has its office along Highpoint Road in Buffalo Township, paid \$545,000 for the property.

It was purchased from First Commonwealth Bank, which had acquired it in June 2013 from Wood Development LP. The tract is off Bull Creek Road on the Tarentum side of the Route 28 expressway. It extends northeast from Pleasant Avenue to Pleasantville Road between the expressway and Little Bull Creek. "Right now we are just trying to figure out what we bought," Zampogna said. "That Job's Hole area is very complex." In particular, he said the topography is varied with a relatively flat expanse of land along the expressway side but then the property slopes down toward the creek. The property is heavily wooded, and there is a pond nearby.

STATE IMPACT PENNSYLVANIA

Court denies driller's request for more information in spill case A judge in Lycoming County has denied a request by ExxonMobil subsidiary, XTO Energy, seeking more information on criminal charges the company faces over a 2010 spill. Last summer, the federal Environmental Protection Agency fined XTO \$100,000 for the incident, which involved approximately 50,000 gallons of waste water being discharged into the Susquehanna River in Penn Township, Lycoming County. The waste water contained high levels of strontium, chloride, bromide, barium, and total dissolved solids and flowed continually for more than two months in the fall of 2010, according to the EPA. XTO originally claimed the spill was an act of vandalism, but later said it was likely caused by a contract worker. Last September, state Attorney General Kathleen Kane filed criminal charges. Earlier this year the company filed a request for a bill of particulars—essentially more detailed information about the charges it faces. On Thursday Lycoming County Judge Marc Lovecchio denied the request, noting that the company has already received transcripts of grand jury testimony and thousands of pages of discovery. "The Commonwealth has provided XTO with ample notice of the charges against it, and XTO has sufficient information to prepare a defense," Lovecchio wrote. "While environmental cases can sometimes be complex, several aspects of this case are not as complicated at XTO is making them to be." Kane's office declined to comment on the case.

Union groups supporting boom in gas-related jobs Union groups are vocally supporting the jobs gains made by natural gas development, to the frustration of some environmental groups who continue to oppose it.

ALLENTOWN MORNING CALL

Letter: Fracking companies attack property owner rights Pennsylvanians near the Ohio border were also awakened by the tremors reported in a story, "Fracking could cause earthquakes, geologists find," in The Morning Call. The quakes, now linked to Hilcorp fracking in the area, occurred in the early morning hours of March 10. On March 11, residents of Lawrence and Mercer counties who had felt the quakes discovered a legal notice in their local newspaper for what amounts to the state's first public hearing on forced pooling. The company involved in the hearing? Hilcorp. Forced pooling refers to legally drilling under a property without the owner's permission as long as enough property owners in the area have given their approval. The state's decades-old Oil and Gas Conservation Law allows forced pooling in deep formations like the Utica shale that sits under our western border counties. As Ohio was curtailing Hilcorp's drilling activities, Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection was planning what it later admitted was not a public hearing but an administrative hearing in which even affected property owners were not considered "interested parties" who could testify and had no plans for a true public hearing.

DELAWARE COUNTY DAILY TIMES

Sunoco finds new life at former Marcus Hook refinery (Sunday) MARCUS HOOK — The construction equipment was silent one particular day last week, but the piles of rubble in front of the former catalytic cracker at 10 Plant of the former Sunoco refinery lay clear evidence of the changes occurring at the site. “All of this standing here,” Jonathan Hunt, Sunoco Logistics director of the Marcus Hook Industrial Complex said as he surveyed the heaps, “in two months we expect will be gone.” On the other side of the 500-acre facility closer to the river, Chicago, Bridge & Iron contractors busily were constructing a 500,000-barrel propane tank and a 300,000-barrel ethane tank with plans for a de-ethanizer to be built directly behind them once they are complete, all positioned to make Delaware County a beneficiary of the opportunity already available in the western part of Pennsylvania because of the Marcellus Shale. “It’s really a game changer in terms of energy production, not just in the region, but in the U.S.,” Hunt said. “It remains to be seen how that plays out.” But, it’s people like Hunt and others at Sunoco Logistics who are taking the chance to be ready for what could unfold, and that attitude has even been adopted by former refinery employee, Glen Phillips, a second generation Sunoco employee who’s overseeing the plant demolition straight through his retirement a couple of years from now. “We kept our heart and soul to keep this plant open,” the 32-year employee said of the battle that ensued two and a half years ago when Sunoco Inc. announced its intention to exit refining and shut the refinery, impacting the 590 workers there. While other facilities transitioned differently — Monroe Energy bought the former ConocoPhillips’ Trainer refinery mostly to produce jet fuel for Delta Air Lines and Sunoco formed a joint venture with The Carlyle Group to create Philadelphia Energy Solutions to keep the Southwest Philadelphia refinery afloat — the Marcus Hook refinery was idled in December 2011 after having refined oil for more than a century.

ERIE TIMES-NEWS

Union City gas plant looks to future UNION CITY -- Unseen pipelines, buried beneath the ground in western Pennsylvania and New York, carry natural gas from about 6,500 wells. Those wells, many in service since the 1980s, provide gas to National Fuel Gas Distribution Corp. and help meet the need for 12 million cubic feet a day at a gas-fired power plant in Jamestown, N.Y. But Oivind Risberg, a native of Norway and the founder of EmKey Energy LLC, the owner of that pipeline network, has been thinking for years about its untapped potential. After 10 years of planning, EmKey Gas Processing LLC has opened a new \$10 million gas processing plant just east of Union City, where five of Risberg’s underground pipelines converge. The plant, at the end of a long gravel lane, is actually a series of open-air installations of compressor units, 30,000-gallon storage tanks, towering vent pipes and complex equipment that cools the gas to nearly 140 degrees below zero and separates out the liquid components of butane, propane, ethane and liquid natural gas. Inside a nearby office, operations manager Kyle Rhoades tracks the separation process, which takes only a minute or two, from a computer bank that measures track flow and temperatures, and alerts staff to any safety concerns. Though expensive to extract, separating these components adds up to found money. Just a few weeks after the new plant was christened with bottles of Champagne and steaks -- cooked on a gas grill, using propane produced on site -- the facility is separating out about 8,000 gallons a day of butane, propane, ethane and liquid natural gas. Risberg hopes eventually to bump that total to 10,000 gallons. The timing was right. Risberg said separating the component parts from the methane makes the most economic sense

when there's a substantial gap between the price of natural gas and the price of crude oil. With crude oil selling for more than \$100 a barrel, the difference in price is near an historic high. "Our risk is if oil significantly declines and gas prices rise, then we get into a squeeze," he said. The new plant is processing about 10 million cubic feet of gas per day, much of it supplied by 30-year-old wells.

HARRISBURG PATRIOT NEWS

Blog: Oyster quiz, duck stamp, bear tourism and more: Outdoor Insider So, how much do you know about oysters? If you've spent any time around the Chesapeake Bay, you've probably seen, tasted, and maybe even shucked an oyster or two. But, what do you really know about oysters? Did you know that since colonial times the bay has lost nearly 99 percent of its oysters because of disease, pollution and overfishing? And did you know that as oysters disappear, billions of dollars have vanished from the economy as well? Far greater has been the damage to the bay itself. A single oyster can filter as much as 50 gallons of water a day, the same amount of water that fills your average bathtub. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation has prepared an online quiz about oysters with some enlightening Qs and As. Check it out.

WASHINGTON OBSERVER-REPORTER

Peters resident enrolls Washington County in Groundwater Guardian program When the Groundwater Foundation of Lincoln, Neb., put out a news release recently noting Washington County was designated as a Groundwater Guardian Community, it wasn't surprising when the website identified the person behind the effort. Joan Jessen of McMurray has worked tirelessly over the years to make people aware that there is a treasure beneath the feet of those who tread upon Western Pennsylvania soil. What many people here take for granted is groundwater. Think groundwater is of little importance? Try living in a desert for any length of time. Jessen submitted to the Groundwater Foundation a community profile for Washington County, noting that groundwater provides 45 percent of the drinking water to the area's 200,000-plus residents. Groundwater flows from beneath the surface to feed wells and springs. "We've been a member of the Washington County Watershed Alliance, working with the Groundwater Guardian Foundation," Jessen said in a recent interview. The nonprofit Groundwater Foundation recognizes the groundwater protection accomplishments of community teams throughout the country and encourages citizen involvement at the local level. Jessen didn't need anyone to prod her into action. In 1991, she helped found the Washington County Groundwater Coalition, which later became known as the Groundwater Coalition Education Committee of the Washington County Watershed Alliance, of which she served as president. The alliance is made up of the various watershed associations monitoring resources in different parts of the county.

Editorial: A promising merger For better or worse, most of the institutions where we deposit our paychecks or get loans are not owned or operated by people within the community. Decisions are made and long-term goals are charted in a glass office tower or executive suite hundreds of miles away. That won't be the case, however, with the merger announced last week of CB Financial Services Inc. and FedFirst Financial Corp., the holding companies of Carmichaels-based Community Bank and First Federal Savings Bank, which has several outlets throughout Washington and Westmoreland counties. The combination of these two companies, announced last week, will keep the decision-making nearby. And that is a positive development for this region. Pat McCune, the president and chief executive officer of Community Bank, said last

week that "Southwest Pennsylvania is going to have a very capable, very service-oriented organization that will be better than ever at filling the void for people who want to work with a locally owned, locally managed community bank." The merger is expected to close in the latter half of the year and involves a transaction of cash and stock totaling a little more than \$54 million. They are also promising that the new bank will be the "premier" banking institution for the Marcellus Shale region and that it will hold "a lot of promise." We look forward to seeing if that promise is fulfilled.

Sewer system to be built for Midland village, Chartiers Industrial Park Sewers might not be among the first things that come to mind when one mentions casino gambling, but thanks in part to the local share of revenue from The Meadows Casino, residents and workers in the village of Midland will have this amenity later this year. On Thursday, the Washington County commissioners took note of the \$1 million local share contribution to the Midland sewer project, which will be part of Canonsburg-Houston Joint Sewer Authority. As part of the project, 24,223 feet of gravity sanitary sewer lines, 103 manholes, four stream crossings and six road crossings will be constructed, said Kerry Fox, Washington County Redevelopment Authority community development specialist. The new system will serve about 260 households in the Midland area and Chartiers Industrial Park, home to Marcellus Shale-related firms. The industrial park contributed \$250,000 toward the project, and the potential of job creation was an important component considered by the local share account committee, said Bill Kiehl, vice chairman of the Chartiers Township board of supervisors. Petrakis Contracting Co. of Monroeville was awarded the \$3,091,945 contract. Kiehl said acquiring property rights-of-way and engineering costs have increased the total to about \$3.6 million. Excavation beneath the Houston area has begun, and the project will progress toward Midland. He hopes to see it completed by year's end, saying the township wants to see two crews working simultaneously.

WILKES-BARRE CITIZENS VOICE

Gas drilling awareness group to meet Wednesday The Gas Drilling Awareness Coalition will meet at 7 p.m. Wednesday in the downstairs meeting room at the Dallas American Legion on state Route 415, across from Leggio's. The guest speakers are Todd O'Malley and Melissa Theis of the O'Malley and Langan law firm, who will talk about recent incidents at the Chapin natural gas dehydration station on state Route 309 in Monroe Township and give an update on a lawsuit filed by residents who live near the facility. The public is invited.

Brush fire season ignites in NEPA Area residents embraced Sunday, April 6. But the beautiful day, which featured warm, windy and dry weather not only signaled the unofficial beginning of spring - it served as the onset of brush fire season in Northeastern Pennsylvania. "We ran 11 calls in like seven hours on (April 6)," said Hanover Township fire Chief Jeff Tudgay. "None were for EMS, it was for fires, brush fires. It was really bad." Fire departments across Luzerne County have since been battling brush fires on an almost daily basis, as Tudgay estimates brush fire calls in the township have gone up at least 90 percent in the past month or so. The peak in wildfires this time of year is normal. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, three elements are needed to spark a brush fire - an available fuel source (like grass or fields), dry conditions and an igniter - and spring days often provide all three. Like some other fire departments, the Hanover Township Fire Department utilizes several different units, including ones that handle car accidents, structure fires and water rescues. The brush unit sees its

specialized vehicles - including a brush truck and brush tanker, which holds 1,200 gallons of water - sit unused for several months at a time. But the aforementioned vehicles, which are built with smaller pumps and fewer hoses to enter the woods, have proven their worth thus far in April.

WILKES-BARRE TIMES LEADER

Other Opinion: The state should not be barred from drilling sites (Sunday) Given the sensitivity associated with deep drilling for natural gas – fracking – it is easy to understand that when a mishap occurs at well sites, companies might want to handle the situation themselves.

Controversy doesn't like company. Easy to understand, but not easy to condone. Fracking is controversial enough without barring those who should be there when something goes wrong.

On Feb. 11, in Greene County, something went fatally and spectacularly wrong. A Marcellus Shale gas well exploded and burned for five days. One worker – Ian McKee, 27, an employee of Cameron International who was working for the well owner, Chevron Corp. – was killed. Now we learn that for two days after the accident, Chevron refused to allow investigators in an emergency response team from the state Department of Environmental Protection to come onto the site – this despite the permit for the well stipulating that the operators should allow “free and unrestricted access” to a properly identified DEP employee. That is outrageous. It took the arrival of DEP Secretary Chris Abruzzo, reminding the company of its legal obligations, before Chevron relented. Until then, DEP had to take air samples from locations farther away.

Chevron's excuse, relayed through a spokesman, was that “Chevron's first priority was to ensure the safety of all responders and prevent additional injuries” and therefore access to the site “during the initial stages of the incident was restricted. ... No one, including Chevron personnel, was permitted access to the pad on the day of the incident, until experts ... arrived on the scene and were able to assess the situation.”

ASSOCIATED PRESS (PA)

Shale oil, gas drilling boom wins favor with labor unions, thwarting environmentalists Amid early complaints that out-of-state firms got the most jobs, some local construction trade workers and union members in Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia say they're now benefiting in a big way from the Marcellus and Utica shale oil and gas boom. That vocal support from blue-collar workers complicates efforts by environmentalists to limit the drilling process of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. “The shale became a lifesaver and a lifeline for a lot of working families,” said Dennis Martire, the mid-Atlantic regional manager for the Laborers' International Union, or LIUNA, which represents workers in numerous construction trades. Martire said that as huge quantities of natural gas were extracted from the vast shale reserves during the past five years, union work on large pipeline jobs in Pennsylvania and West Virginia has increased significantly. In 2008, LIUNA members worked about 400,000 hours on such jobs; by 2012, that had risen to 5.7 million hours. Nationally, the Bureau of Labor Statistics says total employment in the nation's oil and gas industry rose from about 120,000 in early 2004 to about 208,000 last month. Less than 10 percent of full-time oil and gas industry workers are represented by unions. Alex Paris, head of an Atlasburg-area contracting firm founded by his grandfather in 1928, said many of the jobs in the early years of the boom went to out-of-state workers, perhaps because the biggest drilling firms are from Texas and Oklahoma. Now there's been a shift to hiring local contractors that use union labor.

Gas drilling tax turns GOP's heads HARRISBURG - Slapping Pennsylvania's booming natural gas industry with a new tax has long been the currency of Democrats, and now an increasingly grim budget picture is turning Republican heads in the GOP-controlled state Legislature. Some Republicans in the Capitol are predicting that a tax on natural gas extraction could end up in whatever final budget legislation emerges, probably in late June. The multinational industry has been a lightning rod since it arrived in Pennsylvania five years ago, and raising taxes on it would be preferable to cutting aid to schools or the poor, some Republicans say. One obstacle is Gov. Tom Corbett. The Republican has publicly opposed a tax on the industry, both before and after he was persuaded by the Legislature's Republican leaders to sign legislation in 2012 that imposed an impact fee on the industry. till, the tax-like impact fee is equivalent to a much lower tax rate than many other gas-producing states charge the industry, and the issue of raising taxes on Pennsylvania's natural gas industry is popular in opinion surveys. For now, Republican budget makers are watching the performance of April's state tax collections and keeping their options open. "There's some support for an extraction tax in some quarters," said Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Jake Corman, R-Centre. "I don't think it becomes a real discussion until the budget numbers crystallize. But if there's a \$500 million-plus hole to fill, I don't know that people are going to want to go into the budget and peel away education spending. Then an extraction tax becomes a more serious discussion than it has in the past."

Report: Pa. forests impacted by shale gas drilling (Sunday) PITTSBURGH — A small portion of Pennsylvania state forest land has been impacted by shale gas drilling, but many questions remain about how to manage the politically sensitive issue that is opposed by many residents, according to a new report. The 268-page Department of Conservation and Natural Resources report issued this week concluded that "shale-gas production on state forest lands is neither benign nor catastrophic" and that there are clearly impacts and trade-offs. "The question is what trade-offs are acceptable," the report said. The report found that about 1,486 acres of forest have been converted to various types of drilling-related development since 2008, including roads, well pads and pipelines, out of about 2.2 million acres in the state forest system. That gas development resulted in 191 infrastructure pads and 104 miles of pipelines. One group that represents fishermen welcomed the acknowledgement by state officials that drilling in the forests has impacts but said far more details are needed. "It is critical that we review the impacts found in the monitoring report and determine what level of impact is acceptable," said Katy Dunlap, a water project director with Trout Unlimited. "The acceptable level should be determined, at least in part, by the people who use the forests." "We do not support additional leasing on state forest lands" that causes surface disturbance "but honestly the devil is in the details," Dunlap said. "Are we going to lose recreational opportunities?" Cindy Dunn, president of the environmental group PennFuture, welcomed the report but said it "raises more questions than it answers." Dunn asked the state to say when it will release the raw data it collected and questioned how many additional forest acres have been indirectly impacted by drilling.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

Highlighting possible DC region tornado hotspots using warnings and tracks Are certain parts of

the broader region more prone to tornado warnings and tornado touchdowns than others? Both the density of recent warnings as well as actual tornado tracks suggest that's possible. The map above shows the frequency of tornado warnings broken down by small gridded boxes, and also the tracks of tornadoes recorded since 2002. That was the year storm-based polygon warnings were introduced. Overall, most of the tornado warnings issued — and the verified tornadoes in our region — occur between the Blue Ridge and the Chesapeake Bay, with a sharp drop off east of the bay. The location with the most tornado warnings issued over the period is southern St. Mary's county. 21 warnings covered an area near California, Md. When examining confirmed tornadoes, Frederick and Fauquier counties lead the pack at 13. Charles and St. Mary's came in with 12. Other hotspots for recent tornadoes include Harford, Stafford, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties. There are two predominant zones of tornado warning frequency and actual tornadoes forming something of a "V" shape around the D.C.-Baltimore corridor. One zone stretches from Culpeper County through Fauquier County into Southeast Frederick County around Mt. Airy and then up through Carroll County into Pennsylvania. The other zone, seemingly more active, is defined by Spotsylvania and Stafford counties through Charles and St. Mary's counties to the bay. As for actual tornadoes and their tendencies locally: The majority of them move from southwest to northeast or west to east locally. There are a couple of notable exception.

Is your federal office joining the upcoming consolidation wave? The General Services Administration this week identified 19 federal buildings across the nation that will absorb outside offices as part of a nearly \$70 million plan to consolidate agency work sites. The project will cost about \$67 million up front for renovations, but it will save the government an estimated \$17 million annually in rent payments, while eliminating leases and reducing square footage requirements, according to a [GSA announcement](#). Many agencies operate out of multiple offices in a single region, but GSA plans to move some of those work sites into existing federal properties. As part of its plan, the agency has tapped four offices in the Washington region for renovation, including the Hubert H. Humphrey and Mary E Switzer buildings in D.C., the George H. Fallon Federal Building in Baltimore, the Science Applications Court in Vienna, Va., and the Norfolk Federal Building in Norfolk, Va. The revamped facilities will feature "open work spaces," much like the recently updated GSA headquarters in the nation's capital. The layouts emphasize large, open and flexible spaces rather than the traditional setups with cubicles and offices.

Federal Diary column: Senate postal bill would cut workers comp for feds across the government Plans to stabilize the money-losing U.S. Postal Service have been bouncing around Capitol Hill for a long time, long enough to make you wonder if Congress will ever do anything about it. The proposals are designed to help the Postal Service deal with a changing business climate that left it with a net loss of \$5 billion in fiscal year 2013. Yet if the legislation in the Senate becomes law, its reach will extend well beyond the postal facilities and those who work there. The measure could have a significant impact on many federal employees, particularly those who are injured. That worries feds across the government. The legislation would cut some payments provided through the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA), better known as workers' comp, for staffers injured on the job. The Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee has approved the legislation, sponsored by its chairman, Thomas R. Carper (D-Del.).

WAMU-RADIO (NPR)

Underwater Grasses Bounce Back In Chesapeake Bay Scientists say an indicator of the Chesapeake Bay's health has reversed a three-year downward trend. The news comes from the Chesapeake Bay Program's annual report on underwater vegetation in the bay. The program says the abundance of underwater grasses increased 24 percent between 2012 and 2013. "The mid-Bay has seen a big rise in widgeongrass. In fact, the expansion of this species in the saltier waters between the Honga River and Pocomoke Sound was one of the driving factors behind the rise in bay grass abundance," says Robert J. Orth, Professor of Marine Science and Coordinator of the Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Survey. "While widgeongrass is a boom and bust species, notorious for being incredibly abundant one year and entirely absent the next, its growth is nevertheless great to see." Another underwater plant known as eelgrass also saw a modest recovery. Underwater grasses are considered critical to the bay ecosystem because they offer food to small invertebrates and migratory birds and shelter for young fish and blue crabs. The Chesapeake Bay Program is the regional partnership leading the restoration of the bay. Its partner states include Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland. Washington, D.C., is also a partner.

DELAWARE

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL

Earth Day veterans reflect on progress Llangollen Estates resident Raymond E. Majewski took time out from his graduate work at East Carolina University on the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970, to attend an environmental "teach-in." It was a time of widening public awareness about sick rivers, polluted air, toxic dumps, threatened wildlife and lost habitats. Those first years of protests and public debate sparked decades of cleanups, energy efficiency gains and environmental reform. "I think there's much more awareness now, but I don't think things have improved that much," said Majewski, who lives within a few miles of several state or federal superfund sites, a large public water wellfield threatened by pollution and the Delaware City Refinery. "People seemed to be much more concerned about the world back then. Now, it's focused more on immediate gratification, diversional activities," said Majewski, retired head of therapy and rehabilitation services for Delaware Psychiatric Center. Others counted down a long list of local and national accomplishments over the last 45 years, many to be celebrated Tuesday at events large and small, including a program at Rodney Square in Wilmington with 30 vendors, focused on a "Clean Waterways" theme. There have been giant strides since 1970, said W. Michael McCabe, a former staffer for Sen. Gary Hart, D-Colo., and then-Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del, and a former deputy Environmental Protection Agency administrator who now lives in Chadds Ford, Pa. "We've come very far. That decade of environmental legislation and the laws that created them really formed the basis for the accomplishments that we've seen," said McCabe, who served as director for national Earth Day activities in 1980. What followed were years of "greater public awareness, technological improvements and a recognition by industry that not only do they have to comply with environmental laws, but it makes economic sense to do so in the most efficient way," McCabe said. But even as all of that happened, McCabe said, emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping pollutants have mushroomed, threatening to set off a global environmental calamity. "It all pales in comparison with the challenges that climate

change and the impacts of climate change are foreshadowing," said McCabe, who convened a public program in 1998, while serving as EPA regional administrator in Philadelphia, to draw attention to the threat.

Poll: Are you doing anything special for Earth Day?

DELAWARE CAPE GAZETTE

Sussex official says collecting water tax an expensive problem Gov. Jack Markell knows a proposed clean water tax is a tough sell. Collecting the tax via county property tax bills won't be easy either, at least in Sussex County. For starters, Sussex County Administrator Todd Lawson said the county's computer system cannot provide data requested by the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control to determine how the tax would be collected. An upgrade to ...

Wetlands are vital link between land and water Wetlands are known by many names: marshes, swamps, bogs, wet meadows, seasonal ponds and wet woodlands. For scientists, wetlands are areas that are periodically flooded or saturated enough to affect plant growth and soils. Wetlands receive water from tides, rain, surface water runoff and groundwater discharge. Some, such as tidal marshes and floodplain wetlands, are flooded all year; others are never flooded but the water table is at or near the surface for a few months, keeping soils wet. Tidal and nontidal wetlands are natural filters that absorb water runoff. They maintain water quality by trapping sediments and filtering pollutants – but that's not all. Download the Wetlands [PDF](#) for more information.

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON GAZETTE

Report: 100,000 felt symptoms after chemical spill The estimates are based on physician reports to the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department and a household survey conducted by a University of South Alabama environmental engineer who was later hired by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin to investigate the impacts of the Freedom Industries spill. Dr. Rahul Gupta, director of the health department, is scheduled to present the preliminary findings this afternoon in a web-based seminar for the National Association for City and County Health Officials. The 100,000-figure, provided by environmental engineer Andrew Whelton, project far greater public health impacts on the region's residents than numbers previously released by the state Department of Health and Human Resources. DHHR had previously said that 26 people were admitted to area hospitals and 533 treated at released at those facilities for symptoms that could have been related to the spill. Those figures did not include any data for the day of the Jan. 9 spill or the day after. Also, DHHR tracked only hospital treatments, and agency officials stopped counting after Jan. 23, records show. "Those are probably gross underestimates of the true public health impacts," Gupta said. "It's the tip of the iceberg." The new data from Gupta and Whelton is based on local physicians who reported patient information to the health department. Gupta's agency received ongoing reports from 10 physicians, and extrapolated that sampling to account for all 1,600 medical providers in Kanawha and Putnam counties. Also, Whelton had surveyed 16 households

in early January. Those surveys provided useful data on how many residents had experienced common spill symptoms -- skin reactions, eye irritation, nausea, and headaches -- but never sought medical treatment. That data was also used to extrapolate further from the physician reports collected by the health department. Whelton said that the new analysis has been submitted for peer review and possible publication in a scientific journal.

Lawsuits over chemical spill moving forward A federal judge in Charleston has partially consolidated more than 60 lawsuits filed against Freedom Industries and West Virginia American Water over the Jan. 9 chemical spill. To avoid confusion and save time and money, U.S. District Court Judge John Copenhagen on Friday lumped together the plaintiffs' requests to move the cases back to state court. "The risk of inconsistent adjudications, substantial expense to the parties, and inefficient use of court resources markedly increases here if the court declines consolidation at least to some extent," Copenhagen wrote. On Jan. 9, Crude MCHM, a coal-cleaning chemical, seeped from a tank at Freedom Industries on Barlow Drive and into the Elk River, contaminating the water supply of 300,000 West Virginians. About a week after the leak, Freedom filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, which halted lawsuits filed against it. Because of that and after it became clear Freedom was a dying company and wouldn't have any money after it paid environmental remediation costs and attorneys fees, most plaintiffs dropped Freedom from their lawsuits. Attorneys for Freedom Industries have said in court documents they still expect they will be hit with claims later in lawsuits that don't include the company as a defendant.

Chemical leak reported at DuPont plant in Belle BELLE -- The DuPont Co. Chemical plant in Belle had a small chemical leak late Monday afternoon, a 911 dispatcher said. Employees reported a small leak of N-dimethylacetamide, also known as DMAC, according to a Kanawha County Metro 911 dispatcher. A chemical spill alarm went off at the plant just before 5 p.m, the dispatcher said. The dispatcher said that the leak does not pose any danger to the public. Kelley Gillenwater, spokeswoman for the state Department of Environmental Protection, said officials believe more than a pound but not a "large amount" of the chemical spilled. Officials are not sure the exact amount of the chemical spilled. The spill has been stopped. The chemical was contained within Dupont's secondary containment system, she said. Gillenwater said the chemical is a liquid but could have been released as a vapor. "It has to do with a tank that became pressurized and the material came out a vent or release valve," she said. Gillenwater said the DEP's emergency response unit has been in constant contact with DuPont, but she did not believe DEP officials were on the scene. The DEP was first notified of the leak at about 4:20 Monday afternoon. She said that DuPont is investigating the cause of the leak.

DEP wants public input on tank rules (Sunday) State regulators have begun the process of seeking input from the public on rules to implement West Virginia's new chemical storage tank law, passed by lawmakers in response to the January leak of MCHM into the Elk River drinking water supply. The Department of Environmental Protection has asked that "stakeholders" provide written comments before May 15, describing what they think the rules should say. Agency officials plan to consider those comments, then draft a rule and hold an open public meeting "to discuss and debate" the draft prior to the formal rule-making process, which will include a second opportunity for public comment and a formal hearing. "We want as much input as people want to give," DEP Secretary Randy Huffman said Friday. Under the new law (SB373), the DEP is required to write rules to implement a new chemical storage tank safety

program. Lawmakers left many details of the new program — such as specific tank-integrity standards, permit fees and leak detection systems — up to the DEP. The agency is required to have those rules ready for lawmakers to review during the 2015 session.

Blog: MSHA set to announce new coal dust rule Here's the media advisory that went out yesterday from the U.S. Department of Labor: *The U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration will announce a major step forward in the department's End Black Lung – Act Now! initiative on Wednesday, April 23, at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health facility in Morgantown, W.Va. U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Mine Safety and Health Joseph A. Main, NIOSH Director John Howard and others will discuss the release of a final rule to lower miners' exposure to respirable coal mine dust in all underground and surface coal mines.*

WHEELING INTELLIGENCER

City Plans to Turn Drillers RV Park Into Recreation Area Mayor Michael Gracik said having natural gas industry workers hook up their RVs at the field that once hosted football games for Bishop Donahue High School and the former Union High School presents the city a great opportunity. Once the drilling, fracking, pipelining and processing boom concludes, the outgoing mayor hopes the city will turn the site into a recreation area. "If we can rent it out for four or five years, we will have plenty of money for the recreation area," Gracik said. "That is a nice area down close to the (Ohio) River." Gracik said city officials started the RV campground about two years ago when demand for natural gas industry workers began growing. There are now 12 RVs in place at the campground, with places reserved for three additional units. Gracik and City Attorney Brett Ferro said the city can expand the park to hold 24 RVs with only a little extra work. The McMechen campground is one of dozens now scattered across Marshall County, which is central in the Marcellus and Utica shale rush.

WARREN (OHIO) TRIBUNE CHRONICLE

Utica Shale rush shifts to West Virginia MOUNDSVILLE - For several years, companies drilled into the Marcellus shale in West Virginia and the Utica shale in Ohio. Now the Utica rush has come to the Mountain State. Fossil Creek Ohio is signing Utica shale leases in Marshall County, with plans to start sinking wells in the near future. The company said each well will cost up to \$22 million to drill, compared to about \$7 million that some companies have publicly said they are paying to drill in the Marcellus. Other companies also are signing leases. The Utica shale sits below the Marcellus, more than a 2 miles beneath the Earth's surface. "I can't tell you how much we are paying per acre, but it is more than any other company over there," Fossil Creek President Chris Rowntree said. "It depends on where your land is located, though." The highest known offers for Marcellus shale leases in the Ohio Valley would pay \$7,300 per acre, along with 20 percent in production royalties. Landowners who have signed Marcellus leases may or may not have also leased their Utica rights, depending upon the individual agreements. The Marcellus formation lies about 6,000 feet beneath the surface. Rowntree said his company could drill as deep as 13,000 feet to reach the Utica formation in Marshall County. To put that in perspective, there are 5,280 feet in a mile, so Rowntree's company could drill nearly 2.5 miles deep to tap the natural gas reserves. "Not many people have drilled that deep in West Virginia," West Virginia Oil and Natural Gas Association Executive Director Corky Demarco said. "We have not done a lot of exploration on (the Utica) yet. It has been more economical to drill only to about 6,000 feet

to get gas than to go clear to 13,000 feet." After drilling several Marcellus wells in Marshall County, Gastar also is aiming for the Utica formation. The company hopes to drill its Simms 5H well 11,100 feet vertically before turning it to go another 4,200 feet horizontally.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (W. VA.)

Long-awaited U.S. rule on coal dust to be announced Weds. MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — Top federal labor and mine safety officials are heading to West Virginia to release a long-awaited final rule on coal dust. The announcement will be made Wednesday in Morgantown. Among those attending will be U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez and Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. The director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, John Howard, will also discuss the new rule. For 2½ years, the Obama administration has been working on the rule to reduce miners' exposure to dust that causes black lung. Black lung, or coal workers' pneumoconiosis, is an irreversible and potentially deadly disease caused by exposure to coal dust.

W.Va. regulators seek input on storage tank rules West Virginia regulators are asking stakeholders for input as they begin developing rules to implement a new chemical storage tank safety law. The Water Resources Protection Act regulates above-ground storage tanks like the one that leaked at Freedom Industries on Jan. 9. The spill contaminated the drinking water of 300,000 West Virginians. The Department of Environmental Protection must write rules to implement the new safety program.

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

Bay grasses rebound in most places Underwater grasses rebounded last year in the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers, partially reversing a three-year decline in a key indicator of the bay's health, scientists said Monday. Aerial surveys detected a 24 percent increase in aquatic vegetation baywide, from 48,195 acres in 2012 to 59,927 acres last year. That's only about third of the goal federal and state officials have set for restoring grasses to levels approaching what they were 50 or 60 years ago. Robert J. Orth, a biologist with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science who coordinates the two-state survey, called last year's growth "a good recovery from what we've been seeing in the previous three years, but it still is far off from our high point" of nearly 90,000 acres in 2002. Scientists track bay grasses annually because they are vital habitat for crabs, fish and waterfowl. They're also sensitive to changes in water quality, which Orth said makes them useful for monitoring the bay's condition. Before last year, the bay's grasses had declined to a level not seen since 1986, a retreat that scientists attributed to a spate of extremely hot summers and severe storms, as well as a troubling decline in overall water clarity. Like land-based plants, underwater grasses need sunlight to grow. Despite gains virtually everywhere else, Orth said grasses dwindled in the Severn, South and Patuxent, and virtually disappeared from the Magothy in northern Anne Arundel County. He attributed most of those losses to lack of water clarity but said he was unsure of the cause in the upper Patuxent. Orth and Lee Karrh, a biologist with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, said last year's improvement likely stemmed from more favorable weather conditions. The healthiest growth occurred in the upper and middle

portions, with the Susquehanna Flats regaining some of the lushness they lost after Tropical Storms Irene and Lee in late summer 2012. Widgeon grass accounted for nearly all the rebound seen in the midbay, from just south of Cambridge down to the Pocomoke River, which Orth described as a mixed blessing. It's prone to rapid proliferation followed by steep declines, he said, so it may be vulnerable to storms. In years past, he noted, the bay supported a greater variety of grasses, capable of coping with varying conditions.

Two new sites added for 14th Annual River Sweep Earth Day cleanup Two new sites have been added to Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway's 14th annual River Sweep, a volunteer shoreline and roadside clean-up in honor of Earth Day, that takes place on April 26 from 9 a.m. to noon, rain or shine. The National Historic Tome School, on what was the Bainbridge Naval Training Center in Port Deposit, is a new location this year, as is Conowingo Creek Boat Launch in Conowingo. Other River Sweep sites include locations in Havre de Grace, Perryville, Port Deposit and Garrett Island.

ANNAPOLIS CAPITAL -GAZETTE

New law limits lawn fertilizer: Better grass through less chemistry Maryland has new laws governing the use of lawn-boosting chemicals that could impact homeowners loading up on grass seed and fertilizer to produce luscious green lawns. "As you begin working outside this spring, keep in mind that the way you care for your lawn can make a difference for the (Chesapeake) bay," Agriculture Secretary Buddy Hance said.

EASTON STAR DEMOCRAT

Bill to study effects of acidification in Bay passes COLLEGE PARK — The General Assembly passed a bill this week that would create a task force to evaluate effects of acidification in the Chesapeake Bay and other state waters and make recommendations on how to address the issue. House Bill 118, which would form the task force and charge it to make recommendations by Jan. 1, 2015, passed with bipartisan support on Monday, the final day of the 2014 session. The state Department of Natural Resources would be required to provide staff to assist the task force. Gov. Martin O'Malley has not indicated whether he will sign the legislation, a spokesman said. The bill passed unanimously in the Senate, and the House of Delegates passed it 104-32. Delegate Eric Luedtke, D-Montgomery, the bill's sponsor, said some House Republicans opposed the bill because it relates to climate change, which scientists have tied to increases in acid levels in global waters. As more carbon dioxide is released into the air, more is also absorbed into global waters, leading the water to become more acidic. This could make it more difficult for sea life, including oysters, to grow. Luedtke hopes the task force will allow the state to begin developing policies to address potential issues related to acidification. "The state's been putting millions into oyster restoration, so it doesn't make sense to do that and not look into this issue," Luedtke said. "We need to start figuring out how we can best help watermen adapt." Some watermen said they were skeptical that the task force would help stave off acidification in the bay. "There's nothing a group of politicians comes up with that's going to end up helping us out. That's just the way it goes," Tim Devine, owner of Barren Island Oysters in Hoopers Island, said in February. "By the time it gets agreed upon, it doesn't do anything." The task force would be comprised of a senator appointed by the president of the Senate; a delegate appointed by the Speaker of the House; the secretary of natural resources; the secretary of the environment; and representatives of the state's aquaculture industry, the Maryland Watermen's Association, the National Aquarium in

Baltimore, the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, all of which would be appointed by Gov. Martin O'Malley.

CHESAPEAKE BAY JOURNAL

DC forging path to restore C&O Canal as Georgetown destination New boat, water taxis, towpath improvements and better access for paddlers are among the ideas floated to attract more visitors. Less than one of the 184.5 miles that make up the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal is located in Georgetown, where it originates. This section of the District of Columbia is the last remnant in the nation's capital of a bygone transportation era that lasted for nearly a century. And it has seen better days. More than two years ago, funding cuts put an end to the living history tours that for years tugged tourists up and down the canal on a mule-drawn boat called The Georgetown. The National Park Service, which runs the entire canal as a linear national historic park, now closes its visitor's center in Georgetown for much of the year, opening it with limited hours in the summer.

VIRGINIA

RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH

Oil and gas leases in bay region spark debate (Sunday) A company that's leasing oil and gas rights in Virginia's rural coastal plain has tapped a gusher of concern. Some people worry that drilling could pollute waters in the Chesapeake Bay region and turn pastoral Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula counties into noisy industrial zones. But the president of the Texas company acquiring the leases, Shore Exploration & Production Corp., said drilling could turn landowners into millionaires and help the environment by providing relatively clean-burning natural gas. "We are the true environmentalists," said Stan Sherrill, who is also the company's CEO. "Unfortunately, other people who claim to be environmentalists are giving a completely false vision of what's happening." It's hard to know just what is happening — or going to happen — because company officials keep offering different versions of their plans, said Ruby Brabo, a member of the King George County Board of Supervisors. "I think they change their answers based on what people want," Brabo said. There are thousands of gas wells and two oil wells in Southwest Virginia but none in eastern Virginia, state officials said. Much of the bay-region controversy centers on a drilling method called hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. Fracking typically involves injecting water, sand and chemicals underground at high pressure to break up rocks that harbor gas or oil. Critics say the process can pollute streams or underground water. Supporters say the worries are vastly overblown. Brabo said Shore officials first spoke of using the watery form of fracking, called hydrofracking. Later they said they would employ a type of fracking that uses little water by substituting substances such as nitrogen or carbon dioxide. "We don't know what kind of fracking is going to occur," Brabo said. In a telephone interview, Sherrill said: "We have no plans whatsoever" to use the watery fracking. Moments later, Sherrill said Shore Exploration is looking for a partner — maybe an oil company — to provide capital and perhaps do the drilling.

Farmers told Dan River acceptable for use Surface water from the Dan River following the Feb. 2 coal ash spill is suitable for irrigation and drinking water for livestock, according to an

assessment from a team of professors at North Carolina State University. The report, released this week, said trace-element influx during flooding of agricultural areas in the Dan River Basin will have only a marginal impact on soils and crops. The assessment analyzed 449 water samples — including their concentrations of 13 trace elements — taken during a 40-day period after the Feb. 2 coal ash spill by Duke Energy and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Amounts of those elements did not exceed accepted levels under standards by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources in 90 percent of samples, and none violated guidelines adopted for drinking-water sources for cattle, according to the assessment. "Total concentrations of trace elements in Dan River water declined sharply from maximum levels that were typically measured one day after the ash release," the report states. "Concentrations measured 2.2 miles downriver of the spill site were equivalent to upstream concentrations within three days after the coal ash release." The study included samples taken from different locations along the Dan River upstream and downstream of the spill site. On Feb. 2, a stormwater pipe underneath a coal ash pond at Duke Energy's old Dan River Station in Eden, N.C., broke, spewing up to 39,000 tons of coal ash into the river. The toxic mixture coated the bottom of the Dan River for 70 miles. The site is about 20 miles upriver of Danville, which gets its drinking water from the Dan River. Duke is preparing to clean up coal ash deposited near the Schoolfield Dam at Abreu-Grogan Park. The report is entitled, "Assessment of Trace Element Impacts on Agricultural Use of Water from the Dan River Following the Coal Ash Spill." It looked at concentrations of trace elements including arsenic, barium, cadmium, chromium, copper, mercury, nickel, lead, selenium, strontium, vanadium, yttrium and zinc. Professors from N.C. State University's Department of Soil Science at the school's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences conducted the assessment. The authors of the analysis were Dean Hesterberg, William Neal Reynolds distinguished professor, Assistant Professor Matthew Polizzotto and Professor Carl Crozier. The assessment focused on surface water and its use on farms. Results would be different for samples of sediment, said Tiffany Haworth, executive director of the Dan River Basin Association. "They are absolutely recommending [farmers] not get into the sediment where the coal ash has settled," Haworth said. "That is key to the findings."

City planning commission gives nod to The James at River Bend The Richmond Planning Commission has a different view of a proposed 16-story condominium building than opponents of the project do on Church Hill. On a 6-2 vote, the commission on Monday recommended approval of a special use permit for The James at River Bend, a 65-unit complex that would feature four penthouse levels in a 160- to 190-foot tall building on the eastern edge of Shockoe Bottom at Pear Street. The commission also voted unanimously to close a dead-end remnant of East Cary Street on the east side of Pear, where a three-story glass entrance is planned. The condominium tower would lie just west of the famous view over the James River from Libby Hill Park, but the issue of what constitutes a scenic and historic vista continues to fire debate over development within sight of the park.

NORFOLK VIRGINIAN-PILOT

Editorial: Chesapeake Bay needs the EPA (Sunday) Attorney General Mark Herring's brief supporting Chesapeake Bay cleanup represents the kind of common sense Virginians hope to see from the state's lawyer. Yet indiscriminate railing against Washington regulation - including

rules designed to clean up the long-beleaguered bay - is what Virginians customarily see from a few of their Washington lawmakers. Thankfully, only one is likely to have any impact. Herring's brief opposes a reckless lawsuit by the American Farm Bureau and a host of construction and agriculture interests seeking to prevent clean-up of the Chesapeake Bay. The Farm Bureau is challenging the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's plan to control nutrients and sediment in the bay's tributaries, fouled by agriculture and development. Decades of insufficient action by states in the watershed led to the EPA plan, which followed a lawsuit by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Big Agriculture is joined in its suit by the Dirty 21 - Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, West Virginia and Wyoming. Those states - almost all led by Republicans - are apparently worried that EPA measures to clean the Chesapeake Bay could force them to address their own rivers and streams. That should make residents wary of fishing or swimming near home. A federal judge in Pennsylvania has already rejected the argument that the EPA doesn't have the authority to clean up the bay. The case is now in the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Herring's brief cites the principle of "cooperative federalism" - necessary in a watershed that crosses state boundaries from New York to Virginia. Since the beginning of the Chesapeake compact three decades ago, federal intervention was threatened if states' couldn't significantly improve the bay. After several missed deadlines, it's now the EPA's job to get bay progress back on track. Unsurprisingly, U.S. Rep. Bob Goodlatte bashed the EPA's efforts. "Each state knows best how to manage their water quality goals, not bureaucrats at the EPA," he said. "However, Attorney General Herring's amicus brief sides with the federal government's efforts instead of the rights of the states. I am disappointed that he would actively work to circumvent the original intent of the Clean Water Act and the authority of the states to write their own water quality plans." Under that ridiculous principle, even if Virginia cleaned up every iota of pollution it put in the Chesapeake Bay, it would be powerless to affect the pollution flowing from Pennsylvania, Maryland, New York, D.C., Delaware and West Virginia. In Goodlatte's world, if West Virginia erected a plant that belched all of its pollution into his congressional district, Virginia would be powerless to stop the flow of toxins. States' rights have limited utility on pollution that flows over borders. The bay's health depends on every state that contributes water and pollution to the estuary. Without coordination among those states, cleanup is impossible. Goodlatte, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee and a two-decade veteran of D.C. politics, may be trying to score a few political points in an election year. Thankfully for the cause of bay clean-up, the courts are unlikely to pay much mind to him or his news releases.

State finds invasive turtles at Staunton store STAUNTON A pet store in Staunton has stopped offering an invasive turtle species for sale following a state investigation. No charges were filed. Pets-N-Pals co-owner Stephanie Foschini tells The News Leader (<http://bit.ly/1jurUea>) that she made a mistake by offering red-eared sliders for sale. She says she confused federal law with state law.

NEWPORT NEWS DAILY PRESS

James River gets ready for its close-up When Capt. John Smith first explored the James River more than 400 years ago, he was making highly accurate maps as well as history. This summer, outdoors enthusiasts plan to make history again when they raft down the big river to craft the very first high-resolution, panoramic images of its entire 340 miles. Andy Thompson of Outside

Ventures in Richmond said he and his partners believe their Tour of the James from its headwaters down to the Chesapeake Bay will mark the first time any river in the world is converted in its entirety into a 360-degree augmented reality map similar to an interactive Google Street View. "When guys like John Smith first explored rivers like the James, they were mapping places that never existed on a map before," Thompson said. "We're trying to get people to see these historical places in an entirely new way." They plan to launch in a custom-built 8-by-16-foot raft around the tiny town of Iron Gate in western Virginia on June 23 and spend about four weeks wending toward Hampton Roads, pulling up at Fort Monroe. Along the way, they plan to take pictures every 30 feet with an array of six digital cameras mounted on a pole 10 feet above the raft. "We're planning on doing photography from sunup to sundown," said Justin Doyle, spokesman for the James River Association, a project partner along with National Geographic and the Chesapeake Conservancy. "It's going to take some time," said Thompson of the meticulous photography. "Maybe (we'll) take a Zen-like approach to the river. But it'll be beautiful, at least."

ROANOKE TIMES

Letter: Farm Bureau opposes EPA's oversight Like most Virginians, the commonwealth's farmers support and see the tremendous value of a productive and healthy Chesapeake Bay. We simply do not believe that the federal government, specifically the Environmental Protection Agency, should have the final say on how to maintain the water quality progress we have made and further improvements we all desire. It is surprising that Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring would defend an EPA action that undeniably ties states' hands and restricts their authority to make their own local land use and development decisions. A pending American Farm Bureau Federation appeal of a related U.S. District Court decision does not challenge Virginia's own cleanup plan or Virginia's ability to work collaboratively with other bay watershed states and with the EPA to clean up the bay. It does challenge the EPA's edict that Virginia and the other bay states cannot change their cleanup plans without EPA approval. As Rep. Bob Goodlatte recently noted, "Each state knows best how to manage their water quality goals, not bureaucrats at the EPA," and no state should have to say, "Mother, may I?" to make its own land use and water quality decisions.

DANVILLE REGISTER & BEE

Coal ash deposits headed to N.C. dry landfill A spokesman for Duke Energy said the utility plans to take the coal ash accumulated near the Schoolfield Dam to a dry landfill in Roxboro, N.C. Jeff Brooks told the Danville Register & Bee the Upper Piedmont landfill, owned by Republic Services, could possibly be the site where 2,500 tons of coal ash deposited on the upstream side of the dam would be taken. The coal ash deposit covers about 26,000 square feet and is up to a foot thick. A Feb. 2 spill at a coal ash pond at Duke's old Dan River Steam Station in Eden, N.C., coated about 70 miles of the bottom of the Dan River with the toxic mixture. A report released last month by the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League said storing coal ash in lined landfills poses a danger to the environment and public health. The league, in its report, recommended that the ash be kept in proven saltstone technology — cylindrical, concrete tanks that would isolate toxins from the soil, air and water.

FREDERICKSBURG FREELANCE STAR

Letter: Virginians urged to say 'no' to fracking Thanks for the excellent coverage of the fracking

issues facing the area. Although Shore Exploration and Production Corp. is trying to paint a rosy picture of gas drilling, I have personally seen it to be otherwise. In my husband's childhood home of Washington, Pa., gas and oil drilling have taken over many farms and public roads. One of his cousins sold the mineral rights to his property to a Texas drilling company, and what used to be a beautiful, peaceful family farm is now an industrial zone. Six days a week, heavy equipment and trucks rumble by their house, kicking up dust and making a deafening racket. Our cousins can enjoy the tranquility of their front porch only on Sundays, when the workers have a day off. A thick layer of dust coats their cars and outdoor furniture. Opening the windows on a nice day is out of the question. A guard shack sits at the end of their driveway near the state road, and all visitors, including family, are questioned by the company's security personnel. The extensive network of roads throughout the farm have destroyed a small orchard and former hayfields. Representatives from Shore would like us to believe that the average industry salary of \$107,000 is an enticement to welcome drilling but fail to tell us that the people making those salaries are not locals; rather, they are people from Texas and Oklahoma who move temporarily to the drilling jobs. This may benefit some of the moderately priced hotels for a while, but management soon realizes that the typical vacationer does not care to stay at a hotel with muddy footprints on the sidewalks and in the hallways and with the sounds of diesel trucks being started in the parking lot at 5:30 a.m. I was pleased to read that attendees at a recent town hall meeting in Dahlgren asked pertinent questions and would not tolerate the nonsense answers given by Shore executives.

LYNCHBURG NEWS AND ADVANCE

Editorial: Chesapeake Bay Restoration a Priority for Entire Nation (Sunday) When Captain John Smith and the English settlers aboard the *The Discovery*, Susan Constant and *Godspeed* first sailed into the Chesapeake Bay in 1607, the Bay was teeming with life. Oysters, all varieties of fish and more sea life than anyone could imagine filled its waters. Today? Not so much. From 1607 until the middle part of the 20th century, the Chesapeake Bay and its seafood industry were major economic engines of Virginia's Eastern Shore, Maryland and Delaware. But centuries of abuse, industrial pollution and development in the Bay's six-state watershed finally proved to much, and by the 1970s, the Bay was on the brink of becoming one giant dead zone. Today, the restoration of the Bay is a massive effort, involving seven states and the District of Columbia and led by the federal Environmental Protection Agency. The Bay is a super-regional economic asset whose revival is greater than the abilities of any one state, concluded President Obama in 2009, when, at the urging of Virginia, Maryland and D.C., he signed an executive order elevating the cleanup of the Bay to a national priority led by the EPA with Virginia, Maryland, the District, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York and West Virginia. That action is now at the center of a federal lawsuit, filed by the American Farm Bureau Federation and on appeal in the Third Circuit, seeking to turn back what they call the "EPA's overreach and power grab." Attorneys general from 21 states filing supporting briefs. Standing with them is Rep. Bob Goodlatte, R-Sixth District and chairman of the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee. Earlier this month, Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring, however, filed a friend of the court brief in support of the EPA's efforts. The Bay watershed is massive in size, extending well into the midsection of the state of New York. But since the early 1980s, cleanup efforts centered on a regional compact between Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia. Billions of dollars were spent with negligible results, at best; so far as water quality and health of the ecosystem, the Bay, figuratively, was treading water. In other words, a state-led effort, often with conflicting

policy goals and implementation, just wasn't working. Hence, President Obama's nationalization and expansion of the restoration efforts in 2009. The Farm Bureau and Goodlatte see the EPA efforts as classic overreach by Big Government. The states, as Goodlatte contends, are the proper powers to enforce waterway cleanup efforts, not the federal government. But sometimes, only "Big Government" has the resources and the reach to tackle a "Big Problem." This is one of those times, we believe.

SUFFOLK NEWS HERALD

Capturing the James The James River Association and a Richmond-based company are about to set sail on a months-long project to create a Google Maps-type experience of the James River and tributaries. Once the project is complete, online viewers will be able to travel up and down the river's entire 340 miles on their computers, said Outside Ventures' Andy Thompson. "We're excited," he said. "We've been doing a lot of troubleshooting, and I think we will be getting under way in June." The aluminum-framed pontoon raft, specially built for the project, is outfitted with six Canon T2i cameras fitted with 8mm fisheye lenses. The cameras are positioned on the boat in different directions atop a stainless steel housing 10 feet above the surface of the water. Each camera is angled at 60 degrees, Thompson said. Thompson and Ryan Abrahamsen will take the small vessel through the tidal section of the James to the Chesapeake Bay, and another team will handle the Upper James. Both teams will have ground support, according to Thompson. "Every three days we are going to get all the memory cards and give them new memory cards," he said. The teams will camp, according to Thompson, at private and state park campgrounds, on islands within the river, and on private land whose owners JRA has a relationship with. A solar panel will power the trolling motor that will be used during the first section, and a 45-horsepower gas engine will take over in the tidal James, Thompson said. "We are going to do the tidal section twice," he said. "The river is so wide, there is no real point in just going down the middle." The goal, Johnson said, is to also photograph "all the major tributaries." Though those details were being ironed out, he added, it would include the Nansemond River and a couple of other Suffolk waterways. How much data will be collected? More than three terabytes and more than 360,000 photographs, Thompson said.

Commentary: Preserving Suffolk's shared resources In two years working here as a reporter, I have come to learn that one of Suffolk's most powerful assets is its natural beauty. A naysayer might argue that combining "natural" and "beauty" when it comes to this city is just a smidgen over the top. I would ask if they had ever walked Washington Ditch in the Great Dismal Swamp, arriving at an eerily placid Lake Drummond to find otter splashing around the shallow edges, or cruised one of the city's northern creeks on a bright morning. Like other communities on the Chesapeake Bay, Suffolk is negotiating the challenge of balancing economic development with environmental issues. How well it does that depends upon whom you ask. While local officials hear much from developers wanting to grow the city and create jobs, they may not get the opportunity to listen to those other voices, which would hope to see that natural beauty protected into the future. But to get its balancing act right, the city needs to hear equally from both. One group working actively to tell the other side of the story is the Nansemond River Preservation Alliance, and another is Suffolk River Heritage. Ever since the Suffolk and Nansemond merged in the 1970s, the notion of Suffolk's north and south — which includes downtown — being treated as two distinct places, one being pushed ahead with public investment and the other left to battle on its own, has taken root. Citizen efforts to dismantle this perception or this reality —

if the two could ever be separated — are a great thing. One effort this Thursday by the NRPA will bring a panel discussion to the Suffolk Center for the Cultural Arts. With three speakers — a local waterman, a man who was responsible for ensuring the Navy is prepared for sea-level rise in Hampton Roads and the president of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation — the discussion will deal with managing Suffolk's natural assets and benefiting from the opportunities they present. The panelists will take questions from the audience, meaning the discussion will potentially branch off in any direction the public sees fit. Mayor Linda T. Johnson will offer opening remarks. After a half-hour reception, the program begins at 7:30 p.m. Registration is not required. Though it engages non-North Suffolk audiences in many other ways, most notably including with outreach into the city's public schools, it's encouraging to see the NRPA host an event downtown — one that will raise important considerations for all of Suffolk.

MISCELLANEOUS

BNA DAILY ENVIRONMENT REPORT

EPA, Corps Open 90-Day Comment Period on Water Act Jurisdiction Rule

Despite requests from Republican senators for more time, the EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are giving the public until July 21, or 90 days, to comment on their joint proposed rule to clarify Clean Water Act jurisdiction over the nation's waters and wetlands. Fifteen Republican senators had asked the EPA to increase the comment period to 180 days.

EPA Updating Human Health Criteria for 94 Chemicals Under Water Act The EPA is in the process of updating human health criteria for 94 chemicals listed under the Clean Water Act using new peer-reviewed exposure data, an agency official confirms. Elizabeth Southerland, director of science and technology in the EPA Office of Water, says drafts of the new criteria will be published this summer for public review and comment.

Comment Period Opens on Changes to Virginia Stormwater Control Rules The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality opens an informal comment period on regulatory changes that would, among other things, give limited regulatory relief to home builders and localities from impending stormwater control mandates set to take effect July 1. The requirements are largely driven by the EPA's mandatory restoration program for the Chesapeake Bay.

GREENWIRE

EPA: Former GOP administrators warn staff cuts will hamper mission U.S. EPA's staff is getting squeezed to its lowest level in decades, and former agency bosses are worried. The Obama

administration has asked Congress to fund a staff of just over 15,000 full-time workers in fiscal 2015. That would be the lowest staffing level the agency has seen since 1989, and former chiefs who led the agency during GOP administrations say it won't be enough for EPA to do its job properly. "They can't possibly" do their jobs with that level of staffing, said Christine Todd Whitman, who led EPA during the George W. Bush administration. "That's part of what people who want to see EPA done away with are doing," she added. "It's a conscious effort to choke things off. You choke it off by refusing to appropriate the funds." The agency's staff ranged from 16,900 to 17,700 employees during the Bush administration. Its peak staffing was in fiscal 1999, during the Clinton administration, when EPA had more than 18,000 full-time equivalent employees. But in the face of tighter budgets across government -- and amid fierce criticism from Capitol Hill about the agency's priorities -- the Obama administration has sought to trim EPA's workforce through attrition and buyouts. The agency has laid out extensive plans to refocus its resources and says its smaller staff will be better supported under the budget constraints (*Greenwire*, Feb. 12). EPA Deputy Administrator Bob Perciasepe told *Greenwire* in an interview earlier this year that EPA "is not doing more with less." Instead, he said, "This is doing what we need to do differently."

COAL ASH: Dan River water OK for crops after spill -- study Researchers from North Carolina State University say farmers should be safe to use water from the Dan River for livestock and to water crops. Three scientists found that amounts of lead, arsenic, copper and other byproducts of coal ash thought to be in the river after a Duke Energy Corp. spill earlier this year have declined sharply as the ash settles to the bottom of the river. "We've heard concerns and questions from residents along the river about safety of water for livestock and other animals as well as for agricultural operations," Duke Energy spokesman Jeff Brooks said. "We hope that this report can provide some information to address those concerns and help reinforce data that we've found that demonstrates that the river is returning to normal water-quality levels."

GREEN BUILDING: Eco-friendly schools might be better for learning Amid a statewide debate on whether to ban current environmental building standards for schools, researchers in Ohio are investigating whether attending a "green school" actually helps children learn. Preliminary results of a study being conducted by scientists at Battelle, a nonprofit research and development organization based in Columbus, indicated that students attending more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly schools have fewer disciplinary problems. Ohio leads the nation in schools certified under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program, a worldwide benchmark for environmental building design. Its green schools use an average of 34 percent less energy and 37 percent less water than traditional buildings, according to the U.S. Green Building Council, which administers LEED. Battelle's research examined the LEED standards' effect on test scores, attendance rates and discipline records in the last two years.

WILDLIFE: Osprey returns to D.C.'s Anacostia after 3,000-mile migration An osprey named Rodney returned to his Washington, D.C., nest last week after completing a 3,000-mile flight from his wintering grounds in Venezuela, according to conservationists tracking the migration habits of Rodney and another osprey named Ron. Ron returned a couple of days earlier from his journey to Brazil. Bob Nixon of the Earth Conservation Corps, an advocacy group that managed the project, said none of the brown and white fishing birds could survive on the Anacostia River 20 years ago. Pollution killed many of the fish there, and "ospreys got wiped out," he said.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Biofuel falls short as an alternative, researchers report (Sunday) WASHINGTON -- Biofuels made from the leftovers of harvested corn plants are worse than gasoline for global warming in the short term, a study shows, challenging the Obama administration's conclusions that they are a much cleaner oil alternative and will help combat climate change. A \$500,000 study paid for by the federal government and released Sunday in the peer-reviewed journal Nature Climate Change concludes that biofuels made with corn residue release 7 percent more greenhouse gases in the early years compared with conventional gasoline.

USA TODAY

Meet three student environmentalists who work to save the earth year-round Here are three college students who are working to preserve the earth year-round:... Hannah Beaman – University of Virginia: Growing up in Virginia, which is close to Appalachia, Hannah Beaman was aware of extraction, hydraulic fracturing and mountain top removal. “I care not only about what it’s doing to the environment but what it’s doing to the community,” she says. “There are a lot of really dangerous public health effects.” Beaman says she wanted to get involved because the practices that occur in Appalachia affect people who don’t typically have much of a voice. After starting college, Beaman says she able to get into a wide variety of environmental causes. “I went to a couple different conferences, including one called Power Shift in Pittsburgh,” she says. “It was really cool being around other students interested in the same issues,” Beaman spent spring break with a program called Mountain Justice Spring Break in West Virginia. “We toured fracking sites and got to see the destruction and tragedy that surrounds them,” she says. On campus, Beaman, a freshman, is involved with UVA’s Climate Action Society and supports divestment. “It’s been a struggle because UVA’s funding is pretty secretive and hidden away from us,” she says. “Before I graduate, I would love to see UVA invest in a revolving green fund.”